

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

2017 SEP -3 PM 3:03

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A convertible rongeur comprising
a front handle piece pivotably attached to a pivot point in a bottom shaft piece having
a tip portion and a handle portion,
engagement means whereby said front handle piece is engaged with a top shaft
cutting piece so as to slideably advance and retract said top shaft cutting piece
relative to the tip portion of said bottom shaft piece when said front handle piece
is compressed relative to said handle portion of said bottom shaft piece,
spring means to resist said compression and hold said front handle piece apart from
said handle portion of said bottom shaft piece,
wherein release means permits said top shaft cutting piece to open from the front, to
allow access for cleaning,
and wherein said top shaft cutting piece, when so opened, remains attached by
attachment means to the body of the rongeur, so as to retain all parts of said
rongeur in one attached unit at all times.
2. (previously presented) [A]The rongeur as in claim 1, wherein said engagement means
comprises a driving slot in the top end of said front handle piece that engages a
driving pin in said top shaft.
3. (previously presented) [A]The rongeur as in claim 2, wherein said release means
comprises a retractable mounting for said front handle piece, which when biased so as
to retract said front handle piece, permits said driving pin to unseat from said driving
slot and slide over said top end of said front handle piece.
4. (previously presented) [A]The rongeur as in claim 3, wherein said front handle can
also be retracted so that said driving pin may slide back over said top end of said front
handle piece so as to reseat in said driving slot.

2017 SEP 10 PM 3:05

PATENT TRIAL DIVISION

5. (previously presented) [A]The rongeur as in claim 1, wherein said attachment means comprises a metal link pivotally attached at one end thereof to the rear portion of said top shaft cutting piece [“and a central point on the top side” to]and at the other end thereof to a central point between the tip and handle portions of said bottom shaft piece.
6. (previously presented) [A]The rongeur as in claims 3 or 4, wherein said driving slot is positioned so as to slant rearward at the top at an angle of approximately 14 degrees from the vertical, and wherein said front handle piece comprises a radius and a ramp to the rear of said slot so as to facilitate the sliding of said driving pin over said top end of said front handle piece.
7. (previously presented) [A]The rongeur as in claim 3, wherein said spring means comprise two elongated spring pieces each having a top and bottom end, the bottom ends of which are attached, respectively, to said front handle piece and said handle portion of said bottom shaft piece, and the top ends of which are rotatably or hingably joined together in a manner such that said springs do not readily detach from each other when said front handle piece is loosened or retracted.
8. (currently amended) A convertible rongeur comprising
a front handle piece;
a bottom shaft piece moveably attached to said front handle piece, said bottom shaft
piece having a tip portion and a handle portion and a longitudinal axis from said
handle portion to said tip portion, said front handle piece being compressed
toward said handle portion of said bottom shaft piece to operate said rongeur; and
a top shaft cutting piece slideably engaged, along said longitudinal axis, with said tip
portion of said bottom shaft piece, said top shaft cutting piece being
disengageable with said tip portion of said bottom shaft piece;
wherein, when said top shaft cutting piece is disengaged from said tip portion of said
bottom shaft piece, said top shaft cutting piece remains attached to said rongeur so
as to retain all parts of said rongeur in one attached unit.

2004 SEP 10 PM 10

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2004 SEP -3 PM 3:03

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